

COMMO CHECK!

Volume 16, Issue 8

Dedicated to the proposition that a career in aviation is not something you do, it's something you survive!

AUG2016

The Official Newsletter of the Professional Helicopter Pilots Association

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Here it is August and my Presidency is drawing to a close. I have some thoughts to share with the membership and also those that are not members. Our membership numbers, both total membership and percentage of membership, have slowly fallen over the last few years. There are various reasons for the overall decline in membership numbers, but the largest by far is the falling numbers in the White Book. Just a few years ago we were running 56-58 per class. Today we are running on average 40 per class. That of course means fewer IPs overall. The lower percentage of employees joining the Union is a harder nut to crack. Most of our newer employees have no idea what it took to get the wages and benefits we now enjoy. All they know is the military that they retired from. I was one of those guys. I literally had no idea. Thus they see no reason to join the Union. What they see is that their pay and benefits are good, and they feel reasonably secure in their job. So a little education is needed. Also, in this issue of the Commo Check, will be another article about the history of PHPA.

Unions were formed as a way to bring safety to the workplace. Pay and benefits came next, along with representation of the individual employee when that employee must interact with management in a possible punishment situation. OSHA now handles all the safety related issues, so the Unions no longer see that as a top priority. However, Unions now feel that guarding against job erosion has now become a top issue.

Pay and benefits are a no brainer. Employees want good pay and benefits. PHPA has done remarkably well since 2000 in getting our pay to where it needs to be. Top pay in 2000 was \$59,990 while today it is about \$106,000. We are now on par with the DAC 13's. We start a little lower than a DAC 13, get ahead at the 7-8 year mark and then fall behind at the 12 year mark. The DAC 13 makes a little more than we do but not by much. Our benefits are first rate. I accept the blame for not working harder to keep the 401k at 8% Company contribution instead of the 4% Company contribution with the additional 4% Company match we have now. The Executive Board is in agreement that this will be one of the bargaining points this year.

Employee representation is especially important when working for a large Corporation. The lone employee really has no power against the Corporation. The only protection the employee has is the Collective Bargaining Agreement and the Union leadership. We have saved many jobs for our employees.

The last big issue for any Union is to protect the jobs that we have and to work with the Company to create more jobs. As most people understand that Companies and Corporations are in business to make money. The Union must understand this, along with the Company or Corporations business model in order to be successful in protecting jobs and helping to create more. It is human nature to want more than you have, to do better, but the hard part is knowing, when enough is enough. Labor history is full of examples of entire industries that once flourished in the United States that barely exist now due to market and labor pressures. When these pressures create an environment in which the Company or Corporation cannot compete, then bad things happen. The U.S auto industry is a prime example of how the Corporations fought back. They closed entire manufacturing plants and either moved them overseas or moved them to southern states that had tough anti-union laws. Who lost out? The employees of the now defunct manufacturing plant, their families, their city and state. The leadership of PHPA is keenly aware of the desires of its membership as it relates to pay and benefits. The Executive Board is also keenly aware of where we stand with our competition, DAC's and military IPs. There is some room to move on pay and the Executive Board will work for that intently.



President

Ron Arsenault

PHPA Local 102

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So, I've outlined what the Union has done for you lately, and what we will be doing in the future. We are working for better pay and benefits, protecting your jobs, and representing our membership. It's a lot like a life insurance policy. No one with a family would not want to have an insurance policy that would help take care of their family, if the need were to arise.

Last, I would like to talk about some things that have happened lately. The Leadership of the PHPA are elected to their respective post by the membership. The folks have decided that they would give of their time and energy to do what is needed for the Union. There are not many that want to volunteer that precious time and energy. I know that there is a stipend for their position. Let's just say that the stipend isn't enough to do the job, and put up with the crap from the membership. To be fair, the term membership is too broad. There are a few people who consider themselves to be experts and run their mouth continuously. Most of the time, these individuals have no idea what they are talking about. Some of these same individuals take to making it personal with insults and being abusive. This is not needed and only makes things less productive. The members of the Executive Board are our experts on the CBA, Company/Union interactions and labor law. Please treat them with more respect, since they are doing a very important job that most of you wouldn't take on yourself. However, if you are inclined to help, willing to learn, and have thick skin, then please think about running for office. It is not advisable to run for the office of President or Vice President without prior Executive Board experience. Personnel with an agenda are also advised not to run. You must be able to support the good of the Union as a whole, not a single entity. With that I'll sign off. Stay Safe!

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

August 11, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President Ron Arsenault. All E-Board members present except Trustee at Large Matt Hedger who had a prior commitment. There were 22 members present.

Recording Secretary: The July meeting minutes were read by Jim Guy and the minutes were approved as read.

Secretary-Treasurer: Rod George read the July Treasurer's report and the report was approved as read. There are 212 members. That is approximately 70% membership.

Trustees' Reports:

Primary Division: Bill Haaren reported that the quarterly audit of our finances was completed. Bill also mentioned that the leave dates for the UH-72 IP's can be obtained from Ron Howes. Ron does not automatically send the approved dates back to the IP's.

Advanced Division: Mel Strobel reported that the last member that was having issues with his 401k was finally taken care of.

BWS Division: Mark Souza reported that the IP that decided to get a Class 1 flight physical was finally back up after 20 months of being grounded. It was his EKG results that grounded him, something that is not done on a Class 2 physical. There was no reason for him to take the Class 1.

-Trustee at Large: Matt Hedger had a prior commitment.

Vice-Presidents Report

Al Hauenstein had nothing to report.

Old Business

Grievances: USAF Goal Day (15-03) and Thanksgiving DONSA (15-04) are going to arbitration. We have an arbitration date set for October 24th thru the 26th. The main issue will be what defines "Work".

Seniority Roster: We are still trying to get a seniority roster from the Company. Ron spoke to a member recently who was upset because he went from near the top of the TH-67 roster to about the middle of the UH-72 roster. Remember that you are inserted into that roster based on your hire date. Leave will continue to be a problem as we transition to the Lakota.

(Continued on page 3)

August Minutes (Continued from page 2)

PL vs SL: Ron recently put in for a PL day. It was declined due to the number of IP's that were available to cover students on that day. This is not new. The Advanced Division Director wanted him to "call in sick" on that day. This is not how this works. When you put in for a PL day, that advises the Company that you will not be at work that day. This is just to give the Company advanced notice so they can try and cover your student. If they can cover them, your students will be flown. If they cannot cover them, your students may have to sit that day and you will have to make up the time. There is no reason to "call in sick" on that day. Recently an IP was reprimanded in Primary Division for not calling in. Ron will look into this.

Lakota PL: Ron reported that a UH-72 was landed due to a vibration in the pedals. The problem turned out to be a bad forward tail rotor drive shaft hanger bearing. This particular bearing is in a position that the pilot cannot see during preflight. There is also no way to lubricate this bearing. We will put out all of the information that we can as they investigate this issue.

New Business

Building Security: Jim Mentzer installed our new security camera system and it is working great. We will be making some adjustments on camera positions and also installing a door locking system.

Army Contract: The Company has the RFP. They have had it for about 2 weeks. The contract should be awarded by the end of October. The contract takes effect April 1st of next year. There are three companies bidding for this contract as of this writing.

E-Board Nominations: Nominations were opened for President, Secretary/Treasurer, Advanced Division Trustee and Trustee at Large.

President: Lee Murphy was nominated last month and accepted the nomination. Johnny Bower from Primary Division was nominated and accepted. Mark Sousa from BWS Division was nominated and accepted.

Secretary/Treasurer: Jock Spencer was nominated and accepted. Having no other nominations, Jock will take over as the new Secretary/Treasurer.

Advanced Division Trustee: Mel Strobel was nominated and accepted the nomination last month. Having no other nominations, Mel will remain as the Advanced Division Trustee.

Trustee at Large: Abraham Swisher was nominated and accepted the nomination last month. Matt Hedger was nominated and accepted the nomination thru Ron.

Time was allotted for each nominee to address the membership. All nominees can write an article that will be published in the next Commo Check. They need to have these in to Teresa by August 19th.

By-Laws: The first reading of the By-Laws amendments was conducted by Jim Guy. There were some very minor changes that will need to be done but the amendments were accepted by the members present. Next month will be the second reading without changes.

Election: Ron asked for an Election Judge to be nominated for the election next month. Justin Watson from Primary Division was nominated and accepted.

From The Floor

There was no new business from the floor tonight.

The winner of the raffle took home \$42 tonight.

There being no new business the meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM.

James W. Guy

Recording Secretary

**OPEIU LOCAL 102
PROFESSIONAL HELICOPTER PILOTS ASSOCIATION
TREASURER'S REPORT**

The undersigned, Treasurer of the PHPA, submits the following report for the month of July 2016

Beginning Balance Checking:	\$103,595.76
Received from All Sources: (+)	\$50,630.43
Total: (=)	\$154,226.19
Disbursements: (-)	\$57,551.48
Ending Balance	\$96,674.71
 AACFCU Share	 \$44,765.50

The annexed statement of receipts and expenditures will show in detail the sources of funds received and expenses to which disbursements were applied.

All of which is respectfully submitted.


Rodney M. George August 1, 2016
Treasurer, PHPA Date

AACFCU CD values as of 31 July 2016:

Certificate #37543-6	\$30,869.56
Certificate #37543-7	\$30,869.56
Certificate #37543-8	\$30,869.56
<hr/> Total Value of CDs:	<hr/> \$92,608.68

Total Members: 212 or 70% of 301

Comparison with July 2015:
Checking Account - \$102,890
Membership - 225

Vice President's Note

By Alan Hauenstein



So, building off of last month's Commo Check, what are some of the guarantees that the Union provides? Annual salary is the big one. Just think this what you can count on for the rest of the contract. "Hey honey, we are getting \$____ every two weeks for the next year!!!" So, she plans on it. What if that guarantee was not in place? What would you do? How do you plan?

Let's take another one, sick leave. Just hypothetically, take a new guy who has been here 5 years and plans on staying 5 more years then leaving. In good health and does not take sick leave so in 5 years he saved up 60 days the maximum. Continues staying health and just before leaving has saved 73 days. He will sell back to the company this sick leave for \$28,499.20. Whoops! Wrong pay chart more like \$29,077.36 for his 73 days of sick leave. How about an old guy that retires. 73 days = \$30,379.68. Where is that in the CBA? Look on page C-1 paragraph C.7. How do you think this guarantee got in the CBA? Someone had to bargain for it, and he is probable already retired. This happened years ago and the Union members would like to see this guarantee continue for a long time. Okay so here's the rub, as the union membership declines these guarantees are in jeopardy of going away. Yeah, just poof and they are gone. If you are not a member of this union I want you to think of what would happen if the union was not here and these guarantees go away. If you are a member I would ask that you talk to the non-members and encourage them to join. We are only great when we have everyone on board and we all stand together.

Here's a list of other guarantees: Holiday Exodus, Funeral Leave, Family Leave, Incentive Leave, Personal Leave, Night Differential, Overtime, Longevity, and the big one Annual Salary. Oh, I forgot 401K, life insurance, seniority. Okay, okay. No more. Come by the Union office and join. Be a part of this great organization.

Let's keep our guarantees intact.

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C. Lee Murphy
Candidate for President

I am a candidate for the office of President of PHPA, Local 102. A Union member since starting my URS employment, I have been very active in union activities. My Union activities include a three year term as the Advanced Division Trustee, instituting the digital voting process, and rewriting the update to the Bylaws. I am a geographical bachelor, my wife lives and works in Chicago. I have no outside business interests in the area and my time away from the work environment is mine to spend as I decide. I have the willingness and time available to work the 60 to 80 hours monthly required to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the President. I have strong regards for the work our Union does in protecting our members and am dedicated to upholding the Union tenants. I also believe our Union is not an island and, as the need arises, we should solicit the expertise and help of OPEIU.

Preserving the Union, protecting the CBA, providing fair and robust representation for our members in all work related matters, and negotiating the best possible benefits package are the cornerstones of my Presidency. Managing these goals requires a President with the passion, dedication, and time to ensure fulfillment to the highest degree. The next two years will be challenging and tumultuous for our Union. This period will see the renegotiation of our work conditions, a dynamic shift in our member demographics, an on-going effort by our third party employer to erode our benefits, and a possible change in our employer.

As President of our Union, I will work hard to ensure the next Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) accurately reflects the scope of work and working conditions affected by the transition to the Lakota. Our compensation package must reflect the change to a more advanced aircraft with digital interface, our requirement to fly single pilot operations in the more complex Lakota, the shift to the multi-discipline training structure, and the mandate for multiple annual evaluations resulting from the change in the training structure. I will work to hold the line on our current benefits package and fight hard to restore benefits that have eroded over time. The on-going arbitration regarding the USAF Goal Days and USA DONSA days will have a major impact on how we proceed. Another major influence to our benefits package is the law suit involving the 250 pound weight limit.

I believe we cannot accomplish the goals I have outlined without the professional help of OPEIU and will work with their experts to formulate a comprehensive strategy. I do not have all the answers and working with our Executive Board team and OPEIU I will strive to provide the best possible representation of our interests and goals.



Mark Souza
Candidate for President

Dear Union Member,

I am writing this letter to ask for your support for my election to the position of President on election day. As a Union member for nearly 20 years, I have had the honor of serving in numerous positions in the Union. I have a long history with the company, working in primary and combat skills. Although my knowledge of the academic division is limited, I commit to devote the time to learn about the needs and desires of all divisions so that I may best represent everyone.

I've seen the ebb and flow of the Union and understand the importance of a strong Union, particularly now. I believe in the Union and know that we must have a strong united voice to protect what we've earned. I believe we should fight for our rights by following our grievance procedure. We may not win every grievance, but we must hold the company responsible for complying with the CBA. I would like to bring strength back to our Union, and I need your help to do it.

Over the years it has become clear that careful monitoring, and a clear understanding of the CBA, is required to ensure that the company complies with the CBA. There are many examples of the company making adverse changes to keep their profit margin the same when changes are made by the Army. Some of these examples are detailed below.

We do not receive overtime compensation in accordance with the CBA. It is company policy to pay overtime for time worked over eight hours because this is what the Army agreed to pay. The company has a contract with the Army. The CBA is our contract with the company. The company bids the contract to make money. We work according to the CBA and should be compensated as per the CBA.

The CBA defines how we work and states how we should be paid. The Army will not pay for DONSA days not worked; therefore, we are required to work on non-training days. It is the company's responsibility to get paid by the Army, not ours.

Although I feel the company has taken advantage in many cases, I don't advocate fighting the company on every issue. We need the company; we need the Army; and we need strong Union members and leaders to right the ship. Decisions should not be made by the Executive Board in isolation. To ensure members have a voice, proposed changes to the CBA should be voted on by informed membership.

Flight reps and trustees will disseminate information so that the membership can make an intelligent vote using the streamlined electronic balloting system.

If you agree that every member has a say on working conditions, I ask that you give me your vote. We need a strong leader that will fight for us, and I am that dedicated leader.

Thank you for your consideration.



Matt Hedger

Candidate for Trustee at Large (Incumbent)

Fellow Union Members,

My name is Matt Hedger, and I am asking for your continued support in allowing me to represent you on the E-Board in the position of Trustee-at Large. I am an Air Force instructor with 9 years on the contract, and have been actively involved with PHPA from day one. My interest and involvement were the reasons my peers selected me to represent the Air Force Division. After the Trustee-at-Large position was vacated last year, I was elected to complete the current term in that position.

Before I came to work at Fort Rucker, I worked for another company in which the union pursued its own agenda, instead of working for the best interest of its members. The result was the failed PHI pilot strike. I was one of the pilots who lost benefits, and eventually my job, because of that strike. If elected, I promise I will do everything in my power to prevent that from happening to us here at "Mother Rucker". Furthermore, I will do my best to improve communications between the union E-Board and the union members. The upcoming CBA negotiation with the winner of the ongoing contract proposal will be a significant challenge for all of us. I will fight to make sure the lawyers from OPEIU are there to prevent any erosion of our current benefits, and work to ensure issues that are important to you are addressed at the negotiating table.

Please take the time to vote (via electronic ballot) and attend the monthly union meetings. The only way to be heard is to use your voice. Our meetings are the perfect forum for this. I hope I can count on your vote in September.

Thank you for taking the time to vote for me.

Abraham Lee Swisher
Candidate for Trustee at Large

During the last few years, we have experienced a decline in Union membership. We must remember that our CBA is how we maintain the gains we have made. As a group, we no longer have a collective memory of what working conditions were like before we had Union representation. We do not want to return to the days when we were at the mercy of the lowest bidder to do as they wanted.

The members of the board are accountable to the membership for the decisions that are made, but we, as members have a responsibility to the board. The labor force needs to be involved heavily in all that the Union representatives do. Without this involvement, we may continue to see decisions being made that some do not feel are in the best interest of the employees.

In recent years, the main focus of the Executive Board seems to be flight line employees. The flight line employees, like everyone else, need aggressive representation. We need to remember that as a Union we must stand together. This means we must look at all parts of the CBA as they apply to "us" not "flight line, academics, and support staff." This change in approach and thinking is the only way to maintain and improve working conditions for us all. Experience has taught us that if we allow a degradation of benefits for one group of employees we can expect the company, in due time, to apply this same practice to other employees within the work force.

We have had turbulent times recently as the Army changes to a new training program and a new training aircraft. We must do what we can to professionally meet our customer's demands. However, we must remember our contract is with our employer, and that aggressive negotiating is what we must expect from our Executive Board members.

It is my goal to work together with the members of our Union and our Executive Board to reverse the loss of benefits some have experienced and to positively impact our working conditions, salary, and benefits. This requires the cooperation of all of us. We must work together. One person cannot change things that we, as the labor force, see as needing to be changed. If elected, this is what I plan to do.

Office Manager's Spot

By Teresa Hess

Hello Members

I would like everyone to please send me an email at your earliest convenience so that I make sure our lines of communication are correct for the pending election. If you have issues or need help on election day please come by my office. I can walk you through the process to make sure your vote is counted.

All the best

Teresa



CHECKLIST

Your next general membership meeting will be 8 September 2016, 630pm at the union hall.

MEETING AGENDA

1. Meeting called to order.
2. Officer Reports.
3. Old Business.
4. New Business.



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